

**REMARKS**

Claims 6 and 9 have been amended to clarify the invention and add limitations. Support for the added limitations" can be found on page 17 line 3-11, and FIG 1, 4, 8, 9 and 15, for example. Claims 1-5 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 15 and 16 have been added, and support can be found in claim 6 and the drawings, for example.

No new matter has been added. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments and reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

**Rejection of Claims 1-4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimoji (US6435728). Claims 1-4 have been canceled, and thus, this rejection is moot.

**Rejection of Claims 6-7 and 9-10 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claims 6-7 and 9-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimoji and further in view of Gehri. The Examiner states that Shimoji discloses every element of the optical fiber connection component in claim 6 or 9. The Examiner further states that Gehri discloses the optical fiber connection component and the connecting method, and thus, it would have been obvious to use the positioning setup of Gehri with the connector device of Shimoji et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

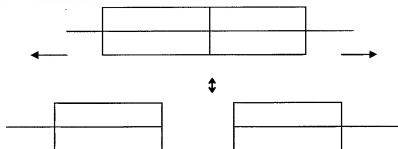
First, independent claims 6 and 9 recite: "two optical fiber connection components each comprising (i) a connection member ..., (ii) rodlike coupling members, and (iii) a turned square U-shaped plug." In the claims, both of the two optical fiber connection components connected to each other comprise (i), (ii), and (iii). Clearly, neither Shimoji nor Gehri teaches or suggests the above feature. Both Shimoji and Gehri use male and female components, only one of which has a U-shaped plug. Further, in Shimoji, only the male component has rodlike coupling members, and the male component has no guides for slidably guiding rodlike coupling members. In Gehri, no rodlike coupling member is provided. Furthermore, in Shimoji, the connecting member has no through-hole for slidably guiding an optical fiber therethrough (none of the drawings shows a through-hole for slidably guiding an optical fiber). The structures disclosed in Shimoji and Gehri are significantly different from those recited in the claims. Thus, not all limitations of claims 6

and 9 are not taught or suggested by Shimoji and/or Gehri, and accordingly, claims 6 and 9 cannot be *prima facie* obvious over Shimoji and Gehri, alone or combined. At least for this reason, the remaining dependent claims also cannot be obvious over Shimoji and Gehri, alone or combined.

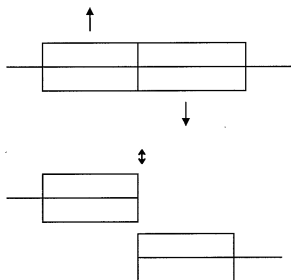
Second, claims 6 and 9 as amended recite: "the optical fiber is arranged such that an end of a cladding of the optical fiber placed in the through-hole of the connection member is located to an edge of the connection member, and the optical fiber is fixed to the turned square U-shaped plug." See Fig. 1 of the instant application for example. Gehri fails to disclose the above features. In Gehri, an end of the optical fiber is kept inside the through hole (set back from the edge) and protected when the optical fibers are not connected. In Shimoji, the connecting member has no through-hole in which an optical fiber is slidably placed. Thus, not all limitations of claims 6 and 9 are not taught or suggested by Shimoji and/or Gehri, and accordingly, claims 6 and 9 cannot be *prima facie* obvious over Shimoji and Gehri, alone or combined. At least for this reason, the remaining dependent claims also cannot be obvious over Shimoji and Gehri, alone or combined.

Third, the configurations of the claimed invention give a significant advantage over the cited references. In claims 6 and 9, the two connection components comprise the same elements and are not like male and female components, and thus, connecting and disconnecting optical fibers can be accomplished without movement of the plugs in a connecting direction of the connected optical fibers. Connecting and disconnecting optical fibers can be accomplished by moving the two connection components in any directions including the direction perpendicular to the connecting direction as shown below. Thus, connecting and disconnecting can easily be achieved even in a small limited space. This feature could not be achieved by the cited references. Conventionally including cited references, when two optical cables are connected, two connection components are connected or disconnected by movement only in the axial direction.

Side view of connecting direction in Shimoji and Gehri



Side view of connecting direction in the claimed invention in an embodiment



Accordingly, the invention recited in claims 6 and 9 exhibits the significant advantage which renders the claims unobvious over the cited references.

In view of the foregoing, claims 6 and 9 cannot be obvious over Shimoji and Gehri, alone or combined. Claims 7 and 10 depend from claim 6 and 9, respectively, and at least for this reason, these claims also cannot be obvious over the references. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejection of Claims 8 and 11 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

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Claims 8 and 11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimoji in view of Gehri and Lee. Claims 8 and 11 depend from claim 6 and 9, respectively. Lee is irrelevant to the features discussed above. Thus, a combination of Shimoji, Gehri, and Lee cannot render claims 6 and 9 obvious, and at least for this reason, dependent claims 8 and 11 also cannot be obvious over the above references. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

#### Claims 12, 13 and 14

Claims 12-14 were added when Supplemental Amendment was filed on March 17, 2006. However, the claims have not been considered in the final Office Action of June 08, 2006.

Claim 12 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 13 and 14 depend from claim 6 and 9, respectively, which cannot be anticipated by or obvious over the prior art as discussed above. Applicant respectfully requests considering claims 13 and 14 accordingly.

#### New claims

Claims 15 and 16 have been added. Claim 15 recites limitations similar to those recited in claim 6. Thus, at least for the same reasons, claim 15 should be patentable over the prior art. Claim 16 recites that the two optical fiber connection components have identical configurations which are not taught or even suggested by the prior art.

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**CONCLUSION**

In light of the Applicant's amendments to the claims and the foregoing Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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